

## Technical Information

### 2019 Annual Business Survey (ABS): Characteristics of Businesses (CB) Dataset

#### Accessible via the Application Programming Interface (API)

Estimates are provided for firms (classifiable by sex, ethnicity, race and veteran status) of employer firms that responded to the characteristic(s) listed below.

*Note:* The ABS API characteristics have two variables; QDESC\_LABEL (shown in the parenthesis below), which describes the question asked, and BUSCHAR\_LABEL, which denotes the answer (see details starting on page 7).

- Number of owners in 2018 (OWNRNUM)
- Whether the business was family-owned in 2018 (FAMOWN)
- Whether the business was jointly-owned or operated by spouses in 2018 (SPOUSES)
- Types of customers of the business in 2018 (CUST)
- Types of workers used by the business in 2018 (WORKERS)
- Reasons that the business ceased operations since 2018 (CEASEOPS)

Characteristic data are tabulated by:

- Geography (U.S., states, and metro areas)
- Industry sector (2-digit 2017 North American Industry Classification System code (NAICS2017) and meaning of code (NAICS2017\_LABEL)) [See <https://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/> for detailed information.]
- Years in business (YIBSZFI)
- Sales and receipts (RCPSZFI)
- Number of employees (EMPSZFI)

The full list of variables can be found at <https://api.census.gov/data/2018/absch/variables.html>

#### Technical Notes:

Detail may not add to the total or subgroup total because a Hispanic or Latino firm may be of any race, and because a firm could be tabulated in more than one racial group. For example, if a firm responded as both Chinese and Black majority-owned, the firm would be included in the detailed Asian and Black estimates but would only be counted once toward the higher level estimates for all firms.

For all firms classifiable by sex, ethnicity, race, and veteran status, the details are counted based on the person(s) owning 51 percent or more of the stock or equity in the business. These estimates are both tabulated by single attribute (such as female-owned) and cross tabulated by double attributes (such as Hispanic, female-owned). Separate estimates are counted, tabulated, and cross tabulated for firms equally owned (50 percent / 50 percent).

Firms not classifiable by sex, ethnicity, race, and veteran status are counted and tabulated separately.

Percentages are based on total reporting within a sex, ethnicity, race, veteran status, and/or industry group, and are not recalculated when the dataset is resorted. Firms with more than one domestic establishment are counted in each industry in which they operate, but only once in the U.S. total for all sectors. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see the Methodology section at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/technical-documentation/methodology.html>

## Abbreviations and Symbols:

Please note that symbols will show in the associated flag field for variables. The data value shown will be zero. The following abbreviations and symbols are used with these data:

- D** - Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual companies; data are included in higher level totals.
- S** - Estimate does not meet publication standards because of high sampling variability, poor response quality, or other concerns about the estimate quality. Unpublished estimates derived from this table by subtraction are subject to these same limitations and should not be attributed to the U.S. Census Bureau. For a description of publication standards and the total quantity response rate, see link to program methodology [page](#).
- N** - Not available or not comparable
- X** - Not applicable

For the complete list of all economic programs symbols, see the Symbols Glossary at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census/technical-documentation/data-dictionary.html>.

## Additional Notes:

The BUSCHAR valid values (listed below) require QDESC in the API call, and vice versa, or the returned data will be incomplete. Example call for SPOUSES:

*[https://api.census.gov/data/2018/absch?get=GEO\\_ID,NAME,NAICS2017,NAICS2017\\_LABEL,SEX,SEX\\_LABEL,ETH\\_GROUP,ETH\\_GROUP\\_LABEL,RACE\\_GROUP,RACE\\_GROUP\\_LABEL,VET\\_GROUP,VET\\_GROUP\\_LABEL,QDESC,QDESC\\_LABEL,BUSCHAR,BUSCHAR\\_LABEL,YEAR,FIRMPDEMP,FIRMPDEMP\\_F,FIRMPDEMP\\_PCT,FIRMPDEMP\\_PCT\\_F,RCPPDEMP,RCPPDEMP\\_F,RCPPDEMP\\_PCT,RCPPDEMP\\_PCT\\_F,EMP,EMP\\_F,EMP\\_PCT,EMP\\_PCT\\_F,PAYANN,PAYANN\\_F,PAYANN\\_PCT,PAYANN\\_PCT\\_F,FIRMPDEMP\\_S,FIRMPDEMP\\_S\\_F,FIRMPDEMP\\_PCT\\_S,FIRMPDEMP\\_PCT\\_S\\_F,RCPPDEMP\\_S,RCPPDEMP\\_S\\_F,RCPPDEMP\\_PCT\\_S,RCPPDEMP\\_PCT\\_S\\_F,EMP\\_S,EMP\\_S\\_F,EMP\\_PCT\\_S,EMP\\_PCT\\_S\\_F,PAYANN\\_S,PAYANN\\_S\\_F,PAYANN\\_PCT\\_S,PAYANN\\_PCT\\_S\\_F&for=us:\\*&for=QDESC\\_LABEL=SPOUSES&key=YOUR\\_KEY\\_GOES\\_HERE](https://api.census.gov/data/2018/absch?get=GEO_ID,NAME,NAICS2017,NAICS2017_LABEL,SEX,SEX_LABEL,ETH_GROUP,ETH_GROUP_LABEL,RACE_GROUP,RACE_GROUP_LABEL,VET_GROUP,VET_GROUP_LABEL,QDESC,QDESC_LABEL,BUSCHAR,BUSCHAR_LABEL,YEAR,FIRMPDEMP,FIRMPDEMP_F,FIRMPDEMP_PCT,FIRMPDEMP_PCT_F,RCPPDEMP,RCPPDEMP_F,RCPPDEMP_PCT,RCPPDEMP_PCT_F,EMP,EMP_F,EMP_PCT,EMP_PCT_F,PAYANN,PAYANN_F,PAYANN_PCT,PAYANN_PCT_F,FIRMPDEMP_S,FIRMPDEMP_S_F,FIRMPDEMP_PCT_S,FIRMPDEMP_PCT_S_F,RCPPDEMP_S,RCPPDEMP_S_F,RCPPDEMP_PCT_S,RCPPDEMP_PCT_S_F,EMP_S,EMP_S_F,EMP_PCT_S,EMP_PCT_S_F,PAYANN_S,PAYANN_S_F,PAYANN_PCT_S,PAYANN_PCT_S_F&for=us:*&for=QDESC_LABEL=SPOUSES&key=YOUR_KEY_GOES_HERE)*

## Valid Data Values

To build valid API queries, data users will need to refer to the following codes.

EMPSZFI represents the employment size categories of firms.

DATA FIELD	Valid codes	Meaning of code
EMPSZFI	001	All firms
	611	Firms with no employees
	612	Firms with 1 to 4 employees
	620	Firms with 5 to 9 employees
	630	Firms with 10 to 19 employees
	641	Firms with 20 to 49 employees
	642	Firms with 50 to 99 employees
	651	Firms with 100 to 249 employees
	652	Firms with 250 to 499 employees
	657	Firms with 500 employees or more

RCPSZFI represents the sales/receipts/revenue size categories of firms.

DATA FIELD	Valid codes	Meaning of code
RCPSZFI	001	All firms
	511	Firms with sales/receipts of less than \$5,000
	518	Firms with sales/receipts of \$5,000 to \$9,999
	519	Firms with sales/receipts of \$10,000 to \$24,999
	521	Firms with sales/receipts of \$25,000 to \$49,999
	522	Firms with sales/receipts of \$50,000 to \$99,999
	523	Firms with sales/receipts of \$100,000 to \$249,999
	525	Firms with sales/receipts of \$250,000 to \$499,999
	531	Firms with sales/receipts of \$500,000 to \$999,999
	532	Firms with sales/receipts of \$1,000,000 or more

YIBSZFI represents the number of years the firm has been in business.

DATA FIELD	Valid codes	Meaning of code
YIBSZFI	001	All firms
	311	Firms with less than 2 years in business
	318	Firms with 2 to 3 years in business
	319	Firms with 4 to 5 years in business
	321	Firms with 6 to 10 years in business
	322	Firms with 11 to 15 years in business
	323	Firms with 16 or more years in business

If any one **person** owned 10 percent or more of the business in 2018, the respondent was asked to provide the sex, ethnicity, race, and veteran status for up to four persons owning the largest percentage(s) of the business in 2018. Please refer to these questions and valid codes (listed by QDESC code and label in the order asked on the questionnaire) for a better understanding of the information collected on the 2019 ABS survey, which resulted in the classification of majority business ownership. Please note that only the race question instructed the respondent to ***"Select all that apply."***

"What is the sex of *Owner 1 (2, 3, or 4)*?"

DATA FIELD	Valid codes	Meaning of code
SEX	001	Total
	002	Female
	003	Male
	004	Equally male-/female
	096	Classifiable
	098	Unclassifiable

"Has *Owner 1 (2, 3, or 4)* ever served in any branch of the U.S. military service, including the Coast Guard, the National Guard, or a Reserve component of any service branch?"

DATA FIELD	Valid codes	Meaning of code
VET_GROUP	001	Total
	002	Veteran
	003	Equally veteran/nonveteran
	004	Nonveteran
	096	Classifiable
	098	Unclassifiable

"Is *Owner 1 (2, 3, or 4)* of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?"

DATA FIELD	Valid codes	Meaning of code
ETH_GROUP	001	Total
	020	Hispanic
	028	Equally Hispanic/non-Hispanic
	029	Non-Hispanic
	096	Classifiable
	098	Unclassifiable

"What is Owner 1 (2, 3, or 4)'s race? **Select all that apply.** (For this survey, Hispanic origins are not races.)"

DATA FIELD	Valid codes	Meaning of code
RACE_GROUP	00	Total
	30	White
	40	Black or African American
	50	American Indian and Alaska Native
	60	Asian
	70	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
	90	Minority
	91	Equally minority/nonminority
	92	Nonminority
	96	Classifiable
	98	Unclassifiable

Please refer to the following business questions and valid codes (listed alphabetically by QDESC\_LABEL) for the business information collected on the 2019 ABS questionnaire.

"Has this business ceased operations?"

(If Yes) "Why did this business cease operations? **Select all that apply.**"

QDESC code and label	BUSCHAR valid codes	Meaning of BUSCHAR code
B27 and CEASEOPS	A1	All firms
	LI	Business is currently operating
	LI00	Business operations have ceased
	LS	Total reporting
	LT	Operating status not reported

"In 2018, which of the following types of customers accounted for 10% or more of this business's total sales of goods and/or services? **Select all that apply.**"

QDESC code and label	BUSCHAR valid codes	Meaning of BUSCHAR code
B14 and CUST	A1	All firms
	IB	Federal government
	IC	State and local government, including school districts, transportation authorities, etc.
	ID01	Other businesses, including distributors of your product
	ID02	Other organizations
	IE	Individuals
	IF	Total reporting
	IG	Item not reported

"In 2018, did **two or more members of one family own the majority** of this business? (*Family refers to spouses/unmarried partners, parents/guardians, children, siblings, or close relatives.*)"

QDESC code and label	BUSCHAR valid codes	Meaning of BUSCHAR code
B02 and FAMOWN	A1	All firms
	BM	Family-owned
	BN	Not family-owned
	BO	Total reporting
	BP	Item not reported
	NB	Not applicable

"In 2018, how many people owned this business?"

- *Do not combine two or more owners to create one owner.*
- *Count spouses and partners as separate owners."*

QDESC code and label	BUSCHAR valid codes	Meaning of BUSCHAR code
B01 and OWNRNUM	A1	All firms
	BQ	1 person
	BQ01	2 to 4 people
	BQ02	5 to 10 people
	BQ03	11 or more people
	BX	Unknown number of owners
	BY	Total reporting
	BZ	Item not reported

"In 2018, did **two or more members of one family own the majority** of this business? (*Family refers to spouses/unmarried partners, parents/guardians, children, siblings, or close relatives.*)"

(If two or more members of one family own the majority) "In 2018, did spouses/unmarried partners jointly own this business?"

(If two or more members of one family own the majority) "In 2018, was this business operated equally by both spouses/unmarried partners?"

QDESC code and label	BUSCHAR valid codes	Meaning of BUSCHAR code
B03 and SPOUSES	A1	All firms
	LZ	Jointly owned and equally operated by spouses
	MA	Jointly owned but primarily operated by male spouse
	MB	Jointly owned but primarily operated by female spouse
	MC	Not jointly owned by spouses
	MD	Total reporting
	ME	Item not reported
	MF	Not applicable

"In 2018, which of the following types of workers were used by this business? **Select all that apply.**"

QDESC code and label	BUSCHAR valid codes	Meaning of BUSCHAR code
B20 and WORKERS	A1	All firms
	JT	Full-time paid employees
	JU	Part-time paid employees
	JV	Paid day laborers
	JW	Temporary staffing obtained from a temporary help service
	JX	Leased employees from leasing service or professional employer organization
	JY	Contractors, subcontractors, independent contractors, or outside consultants
	JY01	None of the above
	JZ	Total reporting
	KA	Item not reported